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2. — *A Practical Treatise on Banking*. By JAMES WILLIAM GILBART, F. R. S., General Manager of the London and Westminster Bank. First American from the Fifth London Edition. New York: G. P. Putnam. 1851. 8vo. pp. 458.

THE public are indebted for the republication of this excellent practical work to Mr. J. Smith Homans, the able and industrious editor of the Bankers' Magazine. In this periodical he has inserted, from time to time, the latest and most approved essays of distinguished English writers on such subjects as currency, banking, exchange, the public funds, and the precious metals, and has thus rendered the work a very useful encyclopædia for bankers and capitalists. Mr. Gilbart is a voluminous writer on banking, and is well qualified for the task he has undertaken by the simple and perspicuous character of his style, and by the very thorough knowledge of the subject which he has acquired during an experience of thirty-six years in the business, and of twenty-two years as a manager of a bank; "during those twenty-two years," he says, with commendable pride, "I have not had one unsuccessful year." He enters minutely into details, explaining all the operations of the banking-house, from the most complex and important down to the functions of the lowest clerk. The method of book-keeping is explained at great length, the processes of computation are exemplified and analyzed, the rules of procedure under various exigencies are laid down, and the whole is made so simple and is so fully illustrated, that any one who should become a complete master of this work, it would seem, might open a bank to-morrow, and conduct it with full success, though he had never before entered the doors of such an institution. The system is one really deserving of study, to see how far intricate and comprehensive operations may be reduced to method, and so arranged that the conduct of them is apparently as easy as the superintendence of the working of a machine. The financial genius of the English people, and their methodical habits of business, appear to great advantage in the pages of such a work. If a foreigner would gain a clear idea of the characteristics of the middle classes in England, he could not spend his time to better advantage than by studying the machinery of the Bank of England. And merchants in any country, though not directly interested in banking, might draw many useful hints for the conduct of their own affairs from a diligent perusal of this volume.

The information is not confined to a single class of banking

institutions. The peculiar features of the mammoth institution of Great Britain, of the numerous joint-stock and private banks, and of the banks of Scotland and Ireland, — and there are many peculiarities in each, — are all enumerated and explained with the same laborious completeness. The work is as comprehensive and exact as the system which it elucidates. It offers proof enough that the disasters sometimes experienced by banks are not the fruits of ignorance or inevitable misfortune, but result from wilful infractions of a system of principles and a code of procedure which, when strictly adhered to, offer no more occasion for casualties than the business of an accounting clerk. Violations of the rules are unfortunately too common; but their frequency does not lessen their heinousness. Mr. Gilbart takes a high view of the moral responsibility of a banker, but not too high, considering the magnitude of the interests at stake, and the widely spread ruin that is often caused by disastrous management. The chapter on "the moral and religious duties of banking companies" was first printed as a separate tract, and attained considerable circulation. From its simplicity and directness, and the large range of Scripture illustrations with which its precepts are enforced, it is well calculated to advance the high end which its author had in view. We can heartily commend the whole work to the attention of those who are immediately interested in banks, and of the commercial classes generally, throughout our country. A second edition has been called for within three months from the time of its first publication.

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3. — *History and Geography of the Middle Ages, for Colleges and Schools.* (*Chiefly from the French.*) By GEORGE WASHINGTON GREENE, Author of "Life of Gen. Greene," "Historical Studies," etc. Part I. History. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1851. 12mo. pp. 454.

THIS work is the first of a series, in which the author proposes to embody the last results of historical research in the form of text-books suitable for the purposes of study in colleges and schools, and useful, as manuals of reference, to scholars and general readers. It is taken chiefly from a popular French work, which in its turn was prepared from the best German authorities; but it seems to be singularly free from any marks of a foreign origin, and is, indeed, characterized by the ease and freedom of an original English work. It was the aim of the author to pre-